



Above; the main living area with its sweeping views. Below; the view to Gun Hill and beach huts from the dunes opposite The Perch

Gillian and Ian Bailey have been regular visitors to Southwold since 1984 and always thought it would be to here they would eventually retire. "That first holiday," recalls Gillian, "was a two-week tour around East Anglia. We started in Lavenham, then Long Melford, before going up to Holt, Wells and Cley, then completing the circle to Southwold, before returning to London. It was Southwold we liked the most and have been returning at least every two years since."

Ian trained as an architect and for many years ran his own medium sized practice in London. Meanwhile Gillian has worked in various architectural practices, sometimes with Ian and most recently in Ian's office. In 2008, with retirement beckoning, they started thinking seriously about potential properties and locations. The instant decision was it had to be Southwold. One house that particularly took their eye was a cottage, on their favoured Ferry Road. It's location was fantastic and the Baileys could immediately see the huge potential.

So with their career backgrounds and vision, Ian and Gillian were well placed to tackle their Southwold project. The cottage

VISTAS *with vision*

Gillian and Ian Bailey's seaside home is a haven in the Southwold dunes

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **TONY HALL**



was probably built in the 1930s, as a fisherman's home or store. It was boarded on the exterior and although it had been lived in for many years, there was no insulation and it was pretty basic.

"Our original intention" recalls Ian, "was to update the old building to modern standards. Not only did we wish to largely retain its form and appearance, we were very aware the house lies within the Southwold Conservation Area. In the end, the building was impossible to update >>

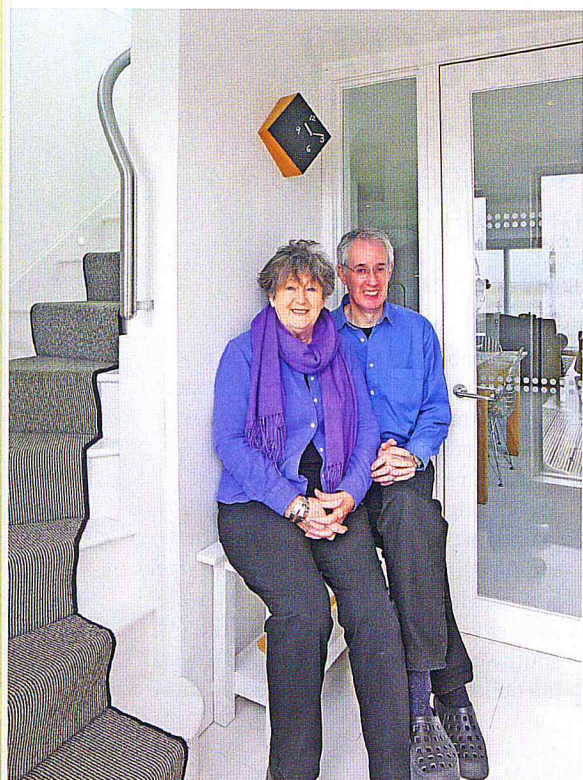
From a rear view you can turn around and look through the house to the front, getting the full effect of the evocative light, and dramatic skies of each vista

<< successfully and planning permission was eventually given for a new build, identical to the existing footprint and style.”

“With regard to the design and our wish list,” recalls Gillian, “first and foremost we wanted to pay homage to the old house. Many of the nearby fishermen’s huts on Blackshore have distinctive varying roof heights and we liked that idea. We also wanted bay windows at the rear to take full advantage of the spectacular views. Ian felt we should have two bedrooms as before, one downstairs, so also a downstairs bathroom and then the master upstairs with its own en suite.”

“From an architectural stance,” says Ian, “it was important with those stunning vistas of the dunes, beach and sea to the front and the marshes, countryside and harbour/river views to the rear that we created a centre line of view which ran from front to back. So from a rear view you can just turn around and look forward through the house to the front view, getting the full effect of the evocative light, and dramatic skies of each vista.”

“Our favourite room” says Ian, “is the master bedroom with its window seat. We just love sitting there with a cup of >>



Southwold attractions

"Southwold has changed very little over the years," explains Ian.

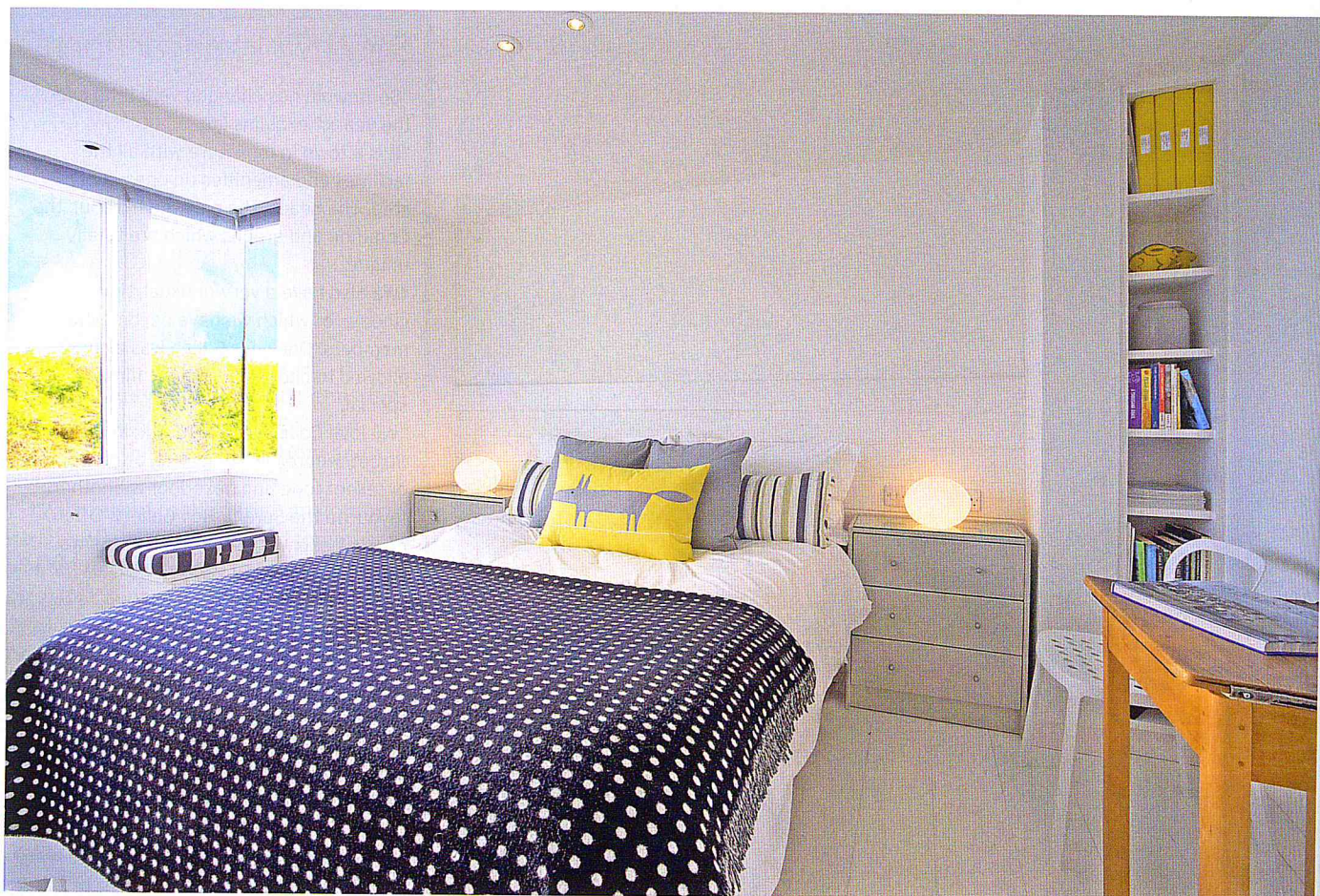
"It is a town in miniature with all the facilities and amenities on ones door step. The beach, the pier, the harbour, the Common and greens which are totally unique.

"We also have a very unusual, tiny cinema, of which we have become life members. One year Gillian was even allowed to choose a birthday film. Very special.

"We love Coasters Restaurant, in Queen Street, where Ollie and Pete, offer excellent food and next door is another favourite the Serena Hall Gallery. Often on our beach walks we stop of at Jim's Gun Hill Tea-Hut."

Left; the main kitchen/living area. Below from far left; Gillian and Ian in the Perch; the master bedroom looking toward the balcony; the house from the outside and the master bedroom looking toward the living area and balcony beyond. Below; the main dining area





Above; the main guest bedroom, decorated in soothing shades of grey and yellow. Below right; a place to enjoy the view on the rear terrace and below left; doors open on to the deck

<< coffee gazing out at the wildlife - the swans, the herons, the owls the expansive skies. Just so beautiful.

"The area which we are most pleased with is the kitchen and the centre island, that we designed and commissioned Caplins Joinery Department to make.

"This is not a big house and every inch of space has been thought about and used successfully." Recently, the Baileys were nominated as a finalist in the Best Individual House Award category for the East Anglian Building Excellence Awards. So why 'The Perch'?

"Oh," laughs Gillian, "it's because neither of us are spring chickens anymore and having retired, we feel that rather in the style of the Monty Python Parrot, here is where we finally fall off our perch!!"

The Perch, Southwold is available for holiday lets through Southwold Lettings/Suffolk Secrets
www.southwoldlettings.com
01502 725409
www.suffolk-secrets.co.uk
01502 722717



GILL AND IAN'S SUFFOLK FAVOURITES

DAY OUT: A trip to the RSPB bird reserve at Minsmere Suffolk.

WASTING TIME: Sitting in the master bedroom window seat watching the wildlife, the skies and the view.

WALK: Along the sand dunes to Southwold Harbour then across on the tiny ferry boat to Walberswick.

EATERY: Coasters Restaurant in Queen Street Southwold. Just excellent food and service from friendly owners.